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# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **President Bush Makes Historic Visit to Virginia Biodiesel Plant**

*President expected to call for greater biodiesel use in America*

**West Point, Va.** – While visiting a biodiesel plant near Richmond, Va., President Bush today is expected to highlight the valuable role that biodiesel can play in weaning the United States from foreign petroleum.

Marking a historic moment in the biodiesel industry, the President will speak before a crowd gathered at Virginia Biodiesel Refinery, LLC, a biodiesel plant that began operating in March 2004. This is the first time any president has visited a biodiesel plant in the U.S. Virginia soybean farmers, along with representatives of the National Biodiesel Board (NBB), American Soybean Association (ASA), United Soybean Board (USB), Virginia Soybean Board (VSB), Virginia Soybean Association (VSA) and Perdue Farms will attend the event, along with a crowd of industry leaders, government officials and others.

“It’s an honor to have the President visit a Virginia biodiesel plant,” said Linda Smith, a farmer leader of VSB. “Biodiesel is starting to take off in this country. I look forward to the day when biodiesel is a household word. I think that day is coming – Americans recognize that we need to do everything we can to help renewable fuels like biodiesel succeed.”

The president’s biodiesel plant visit comes as U.S. oil consumption and imports continue to rise. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the United States spends almost \$200,000 a minute on foreign oil. The U.S. uses approximately 20 million barrels of oil a day, more than half of which is imported. By 2025, demand is expected to rise to 27.9 million barrels a day – about 68 percent of which will be imported.

Biodiesel is a cleaner burning fuel made from renewable resources such as soybean oil. Biodiesel works in any diesel engine with few or no modifications. It has the highest energy balance of any fuel and can be used in its pure form (B100), or blended with petroleum diesel at any level. It substantially reduces air pollution and is nontoxic and biodegradable. Biodiesel is a designated alternative fuel under federal law and is registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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Virginia Biodiesel Refinery is a family owned business and a biodiesel success story. Douglas Faulkner first heard about biodiesel in 1999 when a Virginia soybean farmer, Bill Taliaferro of Montague Farms, requested that Faulkner's employer, George Noblett Oil Company, offer the product. VSA and VSB farmer members had invested in biodiesel for nearly a decade, and they wanted to see the industry emerge. Noblett agreed to sell biodiesel that farmers wanted for use in their diesel equipment. That initial offering of about 3,000 gallons of biodiesel led Faulkner as well as his father, Norman L., and brother, Norman F., to launch Virginia Biodiesel Refinery, LLC in March 2004.

Today, farmers as well as many fleets make up Virginia Biodiesel's customer base. "It makes me proud that my plant adds to the Virginia and U.S. economy by increasing demand for soybean oil," said Douglas Faulkner. "Biodiesel is lifting the anchor on the use of soybean oil."

There are a number of biodiesel users in Virginia including Arlington County, which uses B20 (a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent diesel) in its fleet of approximately 350 diesel fueled vehicles -- 125 of which are school buses.

"By using biodiesel, we've reduced the particulate and eliminated the big black plume," said Ric Hiller, Bureau Chief of Arlington County. "Other than that, our operators really don't notice a difference. We're doing something good for the environment and we're reducing our petroleum use by twenty percent."

Other B20 users include NASA Langley Research Center and George Washington Memorial Parkway, which uses about 16,000-20,000 gallons of B20 a year in about 12 dump trucks and 25-30 other vehicles. VSB and VSA also operate a demonstration vehicle to promote the use of the product.

USB and state soybean checkoff boards funded much of the development of the biodiesel industry in the United States. Soybean farmers have invested millions of dollars in bringing biodiesel into commercial success. VSB has invested checkoff dollars to promote the use of biodiesel on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, on Virginia's Interstates, farms, school systems, and to consumers throughout the Commonwealth. Annual U.S. biodiesel production has increased from 500,000 gallons in 1999 to 30 million gallons in 2004, making it the fastest growing alternative fuel in America. Approximately 500 major fleets use the fuel nationwide.

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*Readers can learn more about biodiesel by visiting [www.biodiesel.org](http://www.biodiesel.org).*